

strong support and friendship with the United States.

During his time in office, President Chen has shown that he is a thoughtful, responsible leader, which has been evident in his handling of cross-strait relations with the People's Republic of China. President Chen has consistently stated that both sides of Taiwan Strait have an obligation to uphold the principles of "goodwill reconciliation, active cooperation and permanent peace." Regrettably, despite his many calls for dialogue and cooperation, the Chinese government has insisted on the dated "one country, two systems" formula as the solution to the Taiwan issue.

President Chen's has asserted that "Taiwan is not a province of one country" but a sovereign nation. I strongly agree with his assertion and believe that President Chen is right to guide his country and his people toward a brighter, more prosperous future.

As a strong supporter of Taiwan and its people, I believe the widespread praise President Chen has received is well earned. He has proven to be an effective leader for all of his people, with an unswerving dedication to continued democratization, economic reform and basic recognition of human rights.

I believe President Chen's U.S. visit will further enhance U.S.-Taiwan relations and friendship. The United States and Taiwan have been allies, partners and friends and this unique relationship will continue to grow stronger in the future.

Mr. Speaker, America welcomes President Chen and salutes him upon the many successes and achievements of his administration.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan to the United States, and to wish him a pleasant visit to New York City at the end of this month. I am pleased that he will have an opportunity to visit with many Members of this Congress, and I am confident that his visit will be productive for our two countries.

During this time of uncertainty and regional instability in many areas around the world Americans appreciate President Chen's continued efforts and dedication to winning the war on terror, his pledge to provide humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and Iraq, and his support for the United States as President Bush and regional leaders work to diffuse tension on the Korean peninsula.

Taiwan has been a reliable friend of the United States for many decades, and I hope that his visit will provide an occasion for our two nations to further strengthen our positive and mutually beneficial relationship.

I also want to assure President Chen and the people of Taiwan that they have many friends in the United States, and to reiterate America's support and commitment to the security of Taiwan embodied by the Taiwan Relations Act, and President Bush's statement last spring that, "Our nation will help Taiwan defend itself," should that need ever arise. I also want to again state my unequivocal support for Taiwan's participation in international organizations like the World Health Organization and the United Nations.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud President Chen's insistence on pursuing a higher standard of human rights for people in Taiwan and across the globe, his commitment to individual liberty and democracy, and would like to again thank him for the stabilizing influence that his demo-

cratically elected government brings to the entire region.

I welcome President Chen to America, and I hope that many of my colleagues have the chance—as I have—to meet and visit with him when he arrives later this month.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 302.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2443, COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 416 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 416

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2443) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2004, to amend various laws administered by the Coast Guard, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. At the

conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my good friend, the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

□ 1600

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 416 is an open rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 2443, the Coast Guard Maritime and Transportation Act of 2003. The rule provides 1 hour of general debate, evenly divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule also provides one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us authorizes over \$7 billion for the Coast Guard and \$18.74 million for the Federal Maritime Commission in fiscal year 2004. The legislation is essential in the effort to strengthen the Coast Guard in its ever-increasing role to defend the homeland.

In this bill we face a turning point in the effectiveness of the Coast Guard. The Department of Homeland Security has called on it to be the defender of American coasts while, at the same time, sending needed resources, soldiers, and vessels to the battle against terrorism in the Middle East.

I am pleased to highlight the Integrated Deepwater System acquisition program. The Deepwater System provides the needed capital to institute effective acquisition of the cutters, computer equipment, and other resources that the Coast Guard so desperately needs. The Deepwater System has not received the funding that was outlined in 1998, but this bill makes up for the years of acquisition lost. H.R. 2443 authorizes \$702 million for fiscal year 2004 to ensure that this acquisition remains on pace, allowing the Coast Guard to remain effective both at home and abroad.

The Coast Guard is particularly important to my district and constituents in south Florida, Mr. Speaker. The Coast Guard Integrated Support Command in Miami is essential to the safety and security of the area. The Coast

Guard in south Florida coordinates integrated plans aimed at hurricane safety, recreational boater safety, and, most important, protection of our coastline from terrorism and drug trafficking.

H.R. 2443 was reported out of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure by a voice vote. This is very good legislation, it is essential to our continued commitment to the security and safety of all citizens and residents of the United States, and we have brought it forth, Mr. Speaker, under a fair and, in fact, open rule.

I would like to thank the chairman, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), for their important work on this legislation; and I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), for yielding me this time; and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this rule and the underlying legislation. I believe I speak for every Member of this side of the aisle when I say that I appreciate the efforts of the majority to bring this bill to the floor today under an open rule and in a bipartisan manner. I only wish that more bills of significant importance in this body and to the country were considered in a similar fashion. Today's rule is an open rule, and Members are permitted to offer germane amendments to the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act.

As my colleague previously mentioned, the underlying legislation authorizes \$7.1 billion in fiscal year 2004 for activities of the United States Coast Guard and \$18 million for the Federal Maritime Commission. The level of funding that the House is providing to the Coast Guard is a 4 percent increase over the amount that was appropriated for the agency under the Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2004. The bill also provides the Maritime Commission with an 11 percent increase over last year's funding.

In addition to funding these two important Federal agencies, this bill amends current law affecting the Coast Guard's requirement to fire warning shots, inspect foreign vessels, and collect user fees. The legislation increases the number of commissioned officers in the Coast Guard as well as the number of active duty officers. The bill also improves our ability to respond to oil spills by requiring that oil-carrying vessels develop oil spill response plans. And my goodness gracious is that too long overdue for our Nation and, indeed, the world?

Mr. Speaker, the Coast Guard is charged with the responsibility of pa-

trolling the 12,452 miles of coastline in the United States. Nearly 2,000 of these miles are located in Florida, in my district, as well as that of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), and the Speaker pro tempore's, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY), where the Coast Guard plays, as we so well know, an integral role in patrolling our shores and protecting our citizens. The increase in funding provided in the underlying legislation for this important branch of the United States Armed Services serves as a statement about the role of the Coast Guard in our global war on terrorism.

Reports have shown that America's ports remain susceptible to attack and infiltration by America's enemies. And it does not go insignificantly or symbolically mentioned that I, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), and the present Speaker pro tempore, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY), all three of us on the floor at this time, represent three major ports: Port Everglades, the Port of Palm Beach, and the Port of Miami. Those three ports alone handle more than 13.2 million tons of cargo. In all, well over 1.5 million shipping containers were processed by South Florida longshoremen during the last year.

Certainly these statistics highlight the pressing need to increase the number of customs agents working in America's ports, but they also suggest that the roles of the Coast Guard and the Federal Maritime Commission in protecting our ports are greater than ever.

Mr. Speaker, when Congress created the Department of Homeland Security, it not only reorganized the Federal Government, but it also recommitted itself to the security of America. The underlying legislation, which the House will consider later today, is an extension of that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to support the rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:45 p.m.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 4:45 p.m.

□ 1700

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BEREUTER) at 5 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 1720, by the yeas and nays;

Senate amendments to H.R. 1516, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3365, by the yeas and nays, and House Resolution 414, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining votes in this series will be 5-minute votes.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE FACILITIES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and passing the bill, H.R. 1720, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1720, as amended, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 417, nays 0, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 576]

YEAS—417

Abercrombie	Bono	Collins
Ackerman	Boozman	Conyers
Aderholt	Boswell	Cooper
Akin	Boucher	Costello
Alexander	Boyd	Cox
Allen	Bradley (NH)	Cramer
Andrews	Brady (PA)	Crane
Baca	Brady (TX)	Crenshaw
Bachus	Brown (OH)	Crowley
Baird	Brown (SC)	Cubin
Baker	Brown, Corrine	Culberson
Baldwin	Brown-Waite,	Cummings
Ballance	Ginny	Cunningham
Ballenger	Burgess	Davis (AL)
Barrett (SC)	Burns	Davis (CA)
Bartlett (MD)	Burr	Davis (FL)
Barton (TX)	Burton (IN)	Davis (IL)
Bass	Buyer	Davis (TN)
Beauprez	Calvert	Davis, Jo Ann
Becerra	Camp	Davis, Tom
Bereuter	Cannon	Deal (GA)
Berkley	Cantor	DeFazio
Berman	Capito	DeGette
Berry	Capps	Delahunt
Biggart	Capuano	DeLauro
Bilirakis	Cardin	DeLay
Bishop (GA)	Cardoza	DeMint
Bishop (NY)	Carson (IN)	Deutsch
Bishop (UT)	Carson (OK)	Diaz-Balart, L.
Blackburn	Carter	Diaz-Balart, M.
Blumenauer	Chabot	Dicks
Blunt	Chocola	Dingell
Boehlert	Clay	Doggett
Boehner	Clyburn	Doolittle
Bonilla	Coble	Doyle
Bonner	Cole	Dreier